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Trans Students in post-compulsory education: A scoping review – preliminary findings

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Background to review

- The experiences/needs of students identifying on the trans*spectrum are under-researched and under-reported in the literature (Garvey et al, 2015).
- Need to search for/support the implementation of more inclusive ways of conceptualizing; understanding, listening and supporting students with trans identities in post-compulsory education.
- Gender-identity-based prejudice, discrimination and violence remain one of the least discussed issues even within the literature that addresses LGBT issues within education (Dilley, 2004).
- Post-compulsory education an important social space that if not inclusive and supportive, can have long term detrimental effects on students from the trans* community.

Aims / Objectives

Scoping current knowledge of Transgender (Trans*) students in higher education through the literature – mapping what it tells us about?

- 1) Differences and complexities of gender and its related concepts within the setting of post-compulsory education
- 2) Broader discourses under the LGBTQI banner and spaces for dialogue about Trans issues
- 3) Institutional policies, processes and engagement with Trans issues
- 4) Theoretical basis for trans* inclusion
- 5) Identifying spaces for dialogue and critical engagement with trans* issues in post-compulsory education
- 6) What innovations are needed?
- 7) The priorities for the research agenda?

Methods

- Systematic literature review conducted concerning knowledge of Transgender (Trans*) students in post-compulsory education.
- International and UK electronic bibliographic databases in the fields of education (e.g. ERIC) were used to search for relevant literature.
- Lateral searching techniques were also employed, such as searching key authors works and reference lists.
- A range of search terms were developed using guidance from the mnemonic PICO (Population, phenomenon of Interest, Context; Joanna Briggs Institute, 2011).
- An extraction table was created to summarize the main findings from each article (incorporating CASP).
- Final papers included were annotated, coded, categorised and broad themes identified

*(This presentation does not include analysis of literature not yet available)

Table 1. Key terms used in search strategy using PICO[^] (JBI, 2011)

1.Population	2.phenomenon of Interest	3.Context
Student*	Trans*	Higher education
	“Cross dress*”	Curriculum
	Intersex*	Placement
	LGBTQ	Universit*
	Queer*	Further education

Notes:

[^]PICO: **P**opulation, phenomenon of **I**nterest, **C**ontext.

Table 2. Summary of eligibility criteria

Study designs: No restrictions

Publication status: published and unpublished

Dates: No limits. Conception of database to November 2015

Language: English

Settings: Post compulsory education facilities

Outcomes: Knowledge of Trans* students in post compulsory education

Trans* Review Exclusion / Inclusion Criteria

Exclude:

High School
Secondary school
Senior School
Secondary college

Include:

Community Colleges

EXCLUDE_abstract_ NoStudent
NoTrans*
NoEd
NotHigherEd
NoTransStudents

Broader discourses under the LGBTQI banner and spaces for dialogue about Trans issues

- 31 studies were inclusive of LGBTQI *
- Most studies report LGBT and LGBTQI findings
- Very few actually had Trans* students in sample
- Many of these studies do not breakdown the different and individual experiences of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans* students
- All studies emphasise the a range of issues facing LGBTQI students in post-compulsory education which require a separate review

(*8 further abstracts identified where papers not yet obtained)

Papers included in the scoping review so far

- Bilodeau, B. (2005) Beyond the Gender Binary: A Case Study of Two Transgender Students at a Midwestern Research University, *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, 3:1, 29-44, DOI: 10.1300/J367v03n01_05
- Duggan, J.P. Kusel, M.L., Simounet, D. M. (2012) Transgender College Students: An exploratory study of perceptions, engagement and educational outcomes. *Journal of College Student Development*, 53: 5, 719-736 September/October
- Effrig, J.C., Bieschke, K.J., Locke, B.D. (2011) Examining Victimization and Psychological Distress in Transgender College Students *Journal of College Counseling*. Fall 14: 143-157.
- Finger, E. F. (2010). *Beyond the Binary: Serving the Transgender Student, Improving the College Experience*. ProQuest LLC. – NOT YET OBTAINED
- Floyd, M., Gruber, K.J. (2011) Baccalaureate Student Perceptions of Challenging Family Problems: Building Bridges to Acceptance, *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 31:1, 65-78.
- Hart, J., Lester, J. (2011) Starring Students: Gender Performance at a Women's College NASPA *Journal About Women in Higher Education* 4.2: 193-217. doi:10.2202/1940-7890.1081.
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- Marine, S.B., Nicolazzo, Z. (2014) Names That Matter: Exploring the Tensions of Campus LGBTQ Centers and TransInclusion *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 7, 4, 265–281.
- McKinney, J.S., (2005) On the Margins: A Study of the Experiences of Transgender College Students, *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, 3:1, 63-76, DOI:10.1300/J367v03n01_07
- Mintz, L.M. (2011) *Gender variance on campus : a critical analysis of transgender voices UC San Diego Electronic Theses and Dissertations* <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/90h4f5rx> Local identifier b7177964.
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- Pusch, R.S. (2005) Objects of Curiosity: Transgender College Students' Perceptions of the Reactions of Others, *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, 3:1, 45-61, DOI: 10.1300/J367v03n01_06.
- Rankin, S., Beemyn, J. (2012) *Beyond a Binary: The Lives of Gender-Nonconforming Youth. About Campus (Sept-Oct) American College Personnel Association and Wiley Periodicals, Inc.* DOI: 10.1002/abc.21086 BOOK
- Seelman, K.L. (2014) Recommendations of transgender students, staff, and faculty in the USA for improving college campuses, *Gender and Education*, 26:6, 618-635, DOI: 10.1080/09540253.2014.935300

Overview of trans studies included

- 8 peer reviewed papers identified + 2 theses + 1 book
- All based on research conducted in USA (2005-15)
- 2 studies based on quantitative design using survey instruments and descriptive statistics, 2 used mixed methods, 7 studies were qualitative
- Researchers have had difficulties in engaging trans students in research because of lack of trust or clear direction
- Language/terminology a really big barrier
- Universities and colleges haven't got a clue!!!
- Need to decouple research from LGB for many issues is evident.
- Research rarely led by trans population
- Small samples except in using secondary data analysis
- Common and consistent themes

Differences and complexities for Trans students

- Remains difficult to assess experiences and support needs
- Differences between groups (intersectionality) e.g in mentoring experiences and counselling referrals
- Significant lower attainment particularly associated with engagement and learning (Duggen et al, 2012).
- Perception of safety and belonging needs direct attention (Duggan et al, 2012)
- Objects of curiosity (Pusch, 2005) few tailored resources
- Increased harassment and discrimination including sexual harassment / racism (Effrig et al, 2011)
- Higher rates of suicide ideation but no utilising student counselling services

Theoretical orientations

- Positioning experience and needs of students within a model of transgender identity development (Rankin, 2012; Bilodeau, 2005) (see D'Augelli)
- Gender performativity – how gender structures power relations and discourses around gender and complexities for trans students challenging these (Hart and Leicester, 2011)

Institutional policies, processes, engagement with Trans issues

- Identifying spaces for dialogue and critical engagement with trans* issues in post-compulsory education (Effrig et al, 2011)
- Leadership potential of trans students in HE
- Significance of safe spaces within LGBTQ networks and alliances
- Faculty/staff and peer training
- Use of language for inclusiveness (Jeffrey & McKinney, 2005; Maine & Nicola, 2014)
- Design of housing support (Krum et al, 2014)

Innovations and priorities for future research

- Research should not be reductionist but include national and cross disciplinary design (Seelman, 2005)
- Very limited measurement/monitoring or visibility of Trans in survey research – finding the appropriate language/terminology – offering appropriate response options
- Life story, narratives, capturing differences between populations in relation to different experiences and needs

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